

of a scarlet than crimson); the chest and breast yellower; under wing-coverts whiter; axillaries also whiter, with black cross-markings: "the soft parts the same as in the male" (*Jouy*). Total length 11 inches, culmen 1·45, wing 5·55, tail 3·9, tarsus 1·05.

Young, probably female. Upper parts and scapulars dusky, with a slight greenish tinge; wing-coverts, basal margin of the outer webs of the primaries and outer webs of the secondaries dingy olive; the light markings upon the outer webs of the primaries only indicated, and of a dingy yellowish colour; rump and upper tail-coverts not of so bright a yellow as in the adult; forehead and crown ashy brown; occiput dingy scarlet; nape and hind neck dusky; a small dull scarlet check-patch; side of the face brownish ashy; from the chin to the chest, inclusive, dingy pale buff, this colour spreading on to the middle of the breast; underparts white, broadly barred with brownish black upon the thighs and under tail-coverts, the white being less pure and the barring browner; tail very indistinctly barred.

This Woodpecker has been supposed, until recently, to be confined to the main island of Japan; but Messrs. Blakiston and Pryer, in their "List of the Birds of Japan" (Trans. As. Soc. Jap. x. pt. 1, p. 136, 1882) suggested the probability of the species ranging into the southern islands also, and their expectations have been realized, as in an amended list by Capt. Blakiston (1884) he records the present species as having been obtained at Nagasaki, in the island of Kiushiu, by Mr. Ringer.

[To be continued.]

II.—*Notes on the Birds of New Zealand.* By T. W. KIRK, Geological Survey Department.

1. PETRŒCA TOITOI.

Settlers' name "Pied Tit"; native name "Miromiro."

I was recently shown a most beautiful example of this species, exhibiting almost pure albino plumage; it is in the private museum of Mr. S. H. Drew, of Wanganui. The

only indication of the normal colouring is a small patch of faint grey on one of the primaries, the whole of the remaining plumage being a most clear white.

As the unfortunate victim was killed with a full charge of powder and an ounce of No. 4 shot, the internal anatomy was so much knocked about that Mr. Drew was unable to ascertain the sex. He has, however, by careful skinning and mounting, succeeded in transforming the battered skin into a really good museum-specimen, a result of which, as an amateur taxidermist, he may well be proud. This is, I believe, the first notice of albinism in the Pied Tit.

The specimen was procured at Paraekaretu, in the Rangitikei district, by Mr. Tripe.

2. *ANTHUS NOVÆ-ZEALANDIÆ*.

Settlers' name "Ground Lark"; native name "Pihoihoi."

Varieties inclining to albinism are known to occur occasionally in this species; but while travelling through the bush on the east coast of the Wellington province, I came on a Maori plantation, and was shown by one of the natives a Ground Lark exhibiting a tendency both to albinism and melanism. The following is a description, jotted down in my pocket-book:—Top of head, and down as far as a line through the eye, dull black; the whole of the body and wings, with the exception of the two outer primaries, were a delicate creamy white; the outer primaries retained the normal greyish-brown colour. The outside tail-feathers, which in an ordinary specimen would be white, were in this case jet-black.

This bird, which was one of the most curious freaks of nature I ever saw, had been tamed, would come when called and allow itself to be picked up and examined, as though conscious of deserving attention on account of its extraordinary and fantastic dress. I endeavoured to effect a purchase, but without success, the Maoris appearing to set great store by their pet.

3. *PHALACROCORAX PUNCTATUS*.

Settlers' name "Spotted Shag."

Writing of this species, Dr. (now Sir W.) Buller says, "This

beautiful representative of the Crested Shag is abundant on the coast of the South Island, but is seldom met with on the northern side of Cook Strait. I observed a party of three at the mouth of the Waikanae River in January 1864; two young birds were killed in Wellington in the winter of 1865; and another was shot in the Gulf of Hauraki, near Auckland; and these are the only instances I know of its occurrence in the North Island * * * I have never had an opportunity of examining the eggs, but I understand that three is the usual number" ('Manual of N. Z. Birds,' p. 95). It will therefore be interesting to note that I was lately informed, by Mr. J. C. McLean, that a colony of fifteen or sixteen of these birds has for more than five years been established on a reef inside Cape Kidnappers.

The latter gentleman states that he has collected the eggs, but never found more than two in a nest. In December 1885 there were five nests, placed at equal distances apart, along the ledge which runs on one side of the rock about three feet from the top. They were composed of seaweed, and were but little larger than the nests of the Mackerel Gull (*Larus scopulinus*, Forst.). One nest had *two* eggs in, and each of three others contained *two* young birds covered with black down; the fifth was empty. On the other side of the rock, out of reach, was another nest; this also contained but two eggs. On visiting the locality again last December the nests were found to be more numerous; but apparently the season was much later, as there were neither eggs nor young birds visible, but the old ones were grouped about, and allowed him to approach quite close before they took wing; their breeding-place being very difficult of access, it is evident they are not often disturbed. The egg is smaller than that of the Black Shag (*P. novæ-hollandiæ*, Gould), and very dirty. The original colour is pale blue.

Mr. McLean has kindly promised to furnish me with the measurements of the eggs in his possession.

The Cape is also the breeding-ground of a large number of Gannets (*Dysporus serrator*).

4. STERNA ANTARCTICA, Forst.

Common Tern ; native name "Tara."

The local name of this bird, in the neighbourhood of Cape Kidnappers, is "The Plough Bird," or "Plough Boy," given on account of its habit of following the farmer's plough so persistently for the purpose of obtaining the grubs &c. thus exposed.

The Kea has acquired the taste for mutton, attacking and killing the sheep ; the Tara has learned to look to the farmer for assistance in providing food ; it yet remains to be seen how far civilized tastes will be adopted by New-Zealand birds, many of which show a decided inclination to adapt themselves to circumstances, although, unfortunately, many others are fast disappearing.

5. NESTOR MERIDIONALIS, Gmel.

Brown Parrot ; native name "Kaka."

The author of the 'History of the Birds of New Zealand' has described several varieties of this bird ; one gorgeously coloured specimen he formerly considered a distinct species, and differentiated it with the title of *N. superbus*. Further examination, however, convinced him that it was only a variety of the Kaka, and he accordingly sank the specific name. In 1884 I recorded the capture of an almost identical specimen at Waikanae, and now another, hardly to be distinguished, is to be seen on view in the shop of Mr. Leardet, taxidermist. I am informed that this latest addition to the long list of New-Zealand birds presenting abnormal colouring was shot in the Kaikoura mountains.

6. LOBIVANELUS PERSONATUS.

Several instances are mentioned in the 'Transactions of the New Zealand Institute' of the discovery of Australian birds on the shores of these islands, viz. :—

Australian Tree Swallow (*Hirundo nigricans*, Vieill.)*.

Royal Spoonbill (*Platalea regia*, Gould), by Dr. Buller†.

* Trans. N.Z. Inst. vol. xi. p. 360.

† Ibid. ix. p. 337.

Australian Roller or Dollar-bird (*Eurystomus pacificus*, Lath.), by Mr. F. E. Clarke*.

Red-capped Dotterel (*Charadrius ruficapillus*, Temm.), by myself †.

The species now to be noticed is more beautiful than any of our previous visitants. The Masked Plover is one of the Spur-wings, and stands about 12 inches high. The body is slight, very elegantly proportioned, and the general appearance is extremely graceful. It is thus described in Gould's 'Handbook to the Birds of Australia' (vol. ii. p. 221), and the New-Zealand specimen agrees in every particular with the description :—"Crown of head and occiput jet-black ; sides of face, back of neck, rump, and all the under surface pure white ; back and scapularies light brownish grey ; wing-coverts grey ; primaries deep black ; secondaries white at the base on their inner webs, cinnamon-grey on their outer webs, and largely tipped with black ; tail white at the base, largely tipped with black, the extreme ends of the feathers being cinnamon-grey, particularly the two centre ones ; irides primrose-yellow ; wattles lemon-yellow ; bill lemon-yellow at base, black at the tip ; legs and feet carmine-red ; the scales in front blackish green."

The bird was observed in a field at Kai Iwi by Mr. G. Penke, who at once went to the house for a gun ; taking a long shot, he fired, and the bird dropped, but when secured appeared quite unhurt, and lived for some time in confinement, refusing food almost entirely, and died, apparently from starvation rather than from any other cause. It was mounted, and is now in Mr. S. H. Drew's museum at Wanganui.

Both sexes possess the spur on the wing, which is a very noticeable feature, but much more developed in the male than in the female, and proves a very effective weapon in warfare. The yellow-coloured mask is supposed to be for the protection of the feathers of the face, the bird being very fond of thrusting its beak into mud and sand in search of small crustacea or the larvæ of Coleoptera, which form the staple of its food.

* Trans. N.Z. Inst. vol. xiii. p. 454.

† Ibid. vol. xii. p. 246.